USES OF BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY.—NOTES ON FORMATION OF THE COUNTY.

Section IV

What was writtens in sections 1st, 2d and 3d was designed to impress upon our minds something like a just conception as to how interesting and instructive is the story of the Divine providential leadings of our ancestral people, that guided them to homes in the primeval forests. Moreover we endeavored to realize how impressively beautiful was and is the heavenly handiwork manifested in fashioning, locating, and adorning the "goodly land," wherein God has permitted our lines to fall, and suffers us to hold as our pleasant heritage.

What was written about the origin of our wonderful region was to illustrate what appears to have been God's method of working in His mysterious way His Creative wonders to perform. In virtue of which He moves and works upon the scheme of a continuous progressive change, according to certain laws and by means of resident forces, and it is our matured, steadfast opinion that our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, is the Resident Force of the creative ages, and of Christianity pure and simple the great fact characteristic of the redemptive ages now in pro-

cess of unfolding.

One of the wisest of recently living thinkers very happily remarks: "To live in the presence of great truths and eternal loves, to be led by permanent ideals, that is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him."

One of the foremost statesmen of the United States in our day thus defines American civilization to be that gradual amelioration of manners, and that improvement of the human race in character which increases the comforts and happiness of mankind.

If we know our own minds, it ever has been and still is our heart's desire and fervent prayer to give due heed to these Apostolic words: "Finally, brethren whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

We would enjoy ourselves, and have all others to participate with us in that mental culture and soul elevation imparted by the teachings of ancestral history, purity of morals, and material civilization in the best sense and highest practical benefits.

Now in this fourth section and what may follow, the paramount aim will be to urge ourselves to the duty of remembering every day and every hour that were it not for people,—men, women, and children,—there would not have been any materials for these sketches; and were it not for people there would be none to read our story; none to occupy and appreciate whatever is good and charming in our Pocahontas environment.

What the soul is to the body, so are the people to any country, and as the body without a pure soul becomes worse than useless, an offensive nuisance, so does a country without people of the proper tone and character. Hence it is that after all the people are the really important subject, whose history is intrinsically valuable for the purpose now in hand. The kind of people that are wanted and for which so many of our best citizens are so anxious to find and choose for leaders, are described in these pathetically earnest lines:

"God, give us men—a time like this demands
High minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not fill;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie."

"For as the body without the spirit is dead," so a county without a live people is dead also. The poet Dante centuries since uttered an aphorism that had it been duly heeded would have increased the happiness of our race immensely. It was to this purport, "Knowledge and wisdom thrive on well remembered facts." In too many instances it is to be regretted that writers of history as well as interpreters of historical writing have virtually assumed premises to deduce facts when in their avowed honesty of purpose as truth seekers and teachers of men they should have first searched out the real facts and from truthful facts formed their premises for the arguments setting forth their views and teachings. Our aim was and we feel sure that we have succeeded in learning and duly recording

in sections previous such facts that if well remembered by our readers, they will be favered by thriving on such knowledge and wisdom as will be profitable to them all not only in this life, but in the life to come. In the light of the knowledge and wisdom sought to be imparted by these sketches, it is fondly hoped that our readers will be helped in whatever efforts they may be making to live clear of the sordid souless commercialism or selfishness that threatens to prevail over the earth like waters on the face of the great deep, and which is so rapidly becoming the spirit of the age, and according to inspiration has ever shown itself as the procuring cause of wars and rumors of wars.

And here we would pause and take special notice of the boys of Pocahontas County and present some thoughts to this effect: It is believed that there are a good many who would make fine men, were they to go about it in the proper manner. Most of them have had their muscles well developed by the labors of the farm; many of them have been improved by attending school and pursuing their studies under more than ordinary difficulties, and thus developed practical common sense. May it not be hoped, therefore, that all our youths will aim to make the best of their opportunities and become first class in whatever calling they may make their life's work. Diligence in business, fervency in spirit, serving the Lord, will attain the highest success to be attained in the present state of existence and endeavor. Due respect for holy things is the beginning of highest wisdom, and good success have all they that carry out the directions given us by the Cre-

ator. He knows what is best for us to follow as a rule of conduct, and in the end it will appear that those are best off for the present and future life who do his commandments.

To help ourselves towards attaining satisfactory view points, the following studies in applied history, illustrating principles pertinent to our ancestral history, are submitted to the studious consideration of all persons interested in our local history, The writer feels sure that all readers who may give such consideration to these studies will find their minds duly broadened and will be qualified to realize more correctly the import and significance of the "short and simple annals" of our pioneer ancestors by perceiving the ruling and guarding hand of God in the varied events of their lives. Though their minds influenced by their providental surroundings may have devised and planned their ways, yet it was the Lord that directed their steps and established their undertakings, and so, after all, the noblest study of living Pocahontas people is the study of the Pocahontas pioneer people who were used by the Divine Disposer of Events in shaping up affairs as we now happily or otherwise find them to be in our day and generation. And, moveover, it will be a salutary lesson in morals to be reminded that as we are so dependant upon those gone before, even so those who may succeed us will either be grateful for our having lived, or may have memories bitter as the worm-wood and the gall. None can possibly live unto themselves, and while it may be a solemn thing to remember this and try to live rightly, "walk humbly, love mercy and act

justly," it is a far more solemn thing not to remember this and thus leave names to be remembered with shame and tears.

The uses of historical study may be very beneficial if judiciously pursued. Its leading purpose should be to enable each generation to benefit from the experience of those who have lived before their times and thus advance to higher lines of action, and have in view nobler aims, and thus be not obliged to start afresh from points occupied by predecessors when they entered on the duties of their day and generation. To make real progress it is better, if possible, to begin where those preceding us have left off, taking up the battle of life on the ground where they have fallen, and carry on the struggle towards final victory.

Persons knowing but little of those gone before are very likely to care but little of those coming after them. To such, who are careless about historical research, life seems a mere chain of sand, while life ought to be a kind of electric chain, making our hearts throb and vibrate with the most ancient thoughts of the past, as well as the most distant hopes of the future. The continuity of history is something marvellous indeed. In virtue of this continuity it may be shown that there are many things that we owe to Babylon, Ninevah, Persia, Egypt, and Phœnicia.

Those who carry watches derive from the Babylonians the division of the hour into sixty minutes. This arrangement may have its faults, yet such as it may be it comes down to modern citizens from the Greeks and the Romans, and they derived it from Babylon. The

sexagesimal division is strictly Babylonian. About 150 B. C. Hipparchus learned it in Babylon, and about 150, A. D., Ptolemy gave the sexagesimal division wider currency. Then in succeeding centuries the French, when applying the decimal system to almost everything else, respected the dial plates of our clocks and watches and let them retain their sixty Babylonian minutes.

Every person who has ever written a letter is indebted to the Romans and Greeks for the alphabet. The Greeks received their alphabet from the Phœnicians, and the Phœnicians learned theirs in Egypt. Students in Phonetics all assert that ours is a very imperfect alphabet, yet such as it has been and may be now, we owe it to the old Phœnicians and Egyptians. In every letter we trace with pen, pencil, or typewriter there lies imbedded an ancient Egyptian hieroglphic. The letter A has the face of the sacred ox, which the Egyptians were ready to venerate with honors almost divine.

As to what we may owe the Persians; it may seem that it could not be very much, as the Persians were not a very inventive people, and the most of their vaunted wisdom they chiefly learned from their neighbors the Assyrians and Babylonians. Nevertheless we owe them something in a way they never intended. We ought to thank the Persians from our inmost hearts for allowing themselves to be defeated so disastrously at the battle of Marathon. It is enough to make one shudder to consider what the world would have come to had the Persians conquered the Greeks and destroy-

ed that wonderful people. So far as we can see from our point of view, had the Persians been victorious at Marathon, Greeks, Romans, Saxons, Anglo-Saxons, and American people would have been Parsees; or Fire Worshippers.

Another thing to be remembered that we owe to the Persians is the relation or ratio of silver to gold in our bimetallic currency. This relation was, no doubt, first arranged in Babylonia, as the talent was divided into sixty mina, and the mina into sixty shekels, the sexagesimal system being applied to money as well as time. This system may owe its popularity to the fact that sixty has more divisors than most other numbers. This bimetallic arrangement of 13 to 1 assumed its practical and historical importance in Persian financial affairs, and spread from them to the Greek colonies in Asia, and from there to America, where it has maintained itself with slight variations down to the recent past.

We have seen how closely the world is held together by the continuity of history, and how, for good or for evil, we are what we are—not so much by ourselves—as by the toil, the sufferings, the conflicts, the character, and the achievements of those who came before us. Our true intellectual ancestors, whatever the blood may have been composed of that coursed their veins, or the bones that formed their skulls. Philosophers assure us that the law of gravitation that orders and governs the course of the planetary worlds in their vast and tireless journeys through the illimitable realms of space likewise governs the destiny of the smallest grain of sand on the seashore as effectively as if it were the

only one. So, in a sense, the continuity of history reaches the destiny of empires, but has its influence on the individual as well. Hence it should be the desire of every one to know something of the past, and by the knowledge thus gained, construe the duties of the present and act for the well being of the future.

In reference to our ancestors, it may be inquired why did they come here? What were the impelling motives explaining their leaving the old world and seeking homes in the pathless regions of the western or new world? Their lot for centuries was assigned to those sections of the earth in northern Europe, and subsequently northern America, whose climates are of such a character that the seasons succeed each other in a manner as requires constant effort for existence. In such latitudes life is and always must be a struggle more or less arduous. There seems to be something in the air that makes the people who breathe it feel there is no time for rest. There must be always a toiling and a building up of ones own happiness out of the materials possessed by their neighbors, for their own personal self interest. Even when homes are as comfortable as can be made, with all the available appliances of civilization, it is a question whether such persons have more real enjoyment in life than the sons of the forest had in their wigwams or tepees on the vales of Pocahontas.

Owing to climatic influences, life with our ancestors was a hard, continuous struggle for mere existence, and hence the accumulation of wealth became a necesity, to provide for the uncertainties of old age, or the

requirements peculiar to their complex social relations. The European climate with its long, cold, and dreary winters in many localities, the difficulties of cultivating the land, the conflicting interests between rival communities, developed the instinct of self preservation to such an extent that most of the virtues and many of vices of European people can be traced back to climatic causes, The character we inherit was formed under the influences mentioned, and so by inheritance, by education, and by necessity we are what we are, in large measure.

The life of our ancestors in Europe and America was a fighting life; hence our highest ideal of life is a life of action and endeavor. Hence our people work until they can work no longer, and are proud to die with the axe or plow handles in their hands, thus choosing rather to wear out than rust out.

Nothing interests what we term the better and more respectable and prosperous element of our population than the history of what they or their ancestors have accomplished by diligence in business in rearing homes starting business enterprises, or in improving our commonwealth. As the result of this restless characteristic, unsatisfying accumulation of earthly possessions, conveniences, and accomplishments, it comes almost naturally to imagine that human life is made perfect thereby, and in many instances so attractive that persons have been known to be sorry to leave what has been gathered together by their energy and self sacrifice.

Then, by way of contrast, let the subject in hand be

considered from another point of view. A branch of the Teutonic race found homes in a far different climatic latitude, and as life comes easy it goes easy. Under such influences the people are never tired of speaking of life as a journey from one village to another, not as a home or resting place permanently. Hence we find them moralizing in this vein: "As a man journeying to another village may enjoy a night's rest in the open air, but after leaving such a resting place for a night proceeds on his journey the next day; thus father and mother, wife and wealth are all but a night's rest to us; so wise people do not cling to them forever."

In one part of the world whence our ancestors came climate impresses the idea that manly vigor, silent endurance, public spirit and domestic virtues illustrate an important feature of the destiny or mission humanity has to fulfil on earth. In another part of the world whence many Americans trace their ancestry, the genial skies, balmy breezes and flowery vales illustrate or impress the idea that another phase of human nature, the passive, the meditative and reflectively sentimental that prompts people to look upward and outward to something not themselves. Thus time is had to inquire whether something could be understood of true significance of the mystery we speak of as life on earth.

The lines have fallen to us in places highly conducive to the development of both phases of human character, and if this article would so impress the readers they would greatly conduce to the contentment and stimulate to making the best of available opportunities to acquire active, energetic, resolute and acquisi-

tive habits of living, along with due attention to whatever promotes meditative patient, seriously thoughtful views of matters pertaining to the higher needs of intellect and spirit. This places within our reach the possibility of presenting to the world noble examples of all around humanity with sound bodies and sound minds.

In reference to the ancestry of our people it may be inferred that our citizenship is of a composite character, German, English, Irish, Scotch, and French.

Such names as these, Lightner, Harper, Yeager, Arbogast, Herold, Halterman, Burr, Siple, Sheets, Casebolt, Shrader, Burner, Sydenstricker, Varner, Hevener, Cackley, Gumm, Overholt, indicate German descent.

Moore, Gillispie, McCarty, McLaughlin, Cochran, Waugh, Hogsett, McNeel, Kerr, Lockridge, Drennan, Gay, McCollam, McCoy, Beard, Baxter, Slaven, Hannah, Hill, Kincaid, Irvine, McElwee, Wallace, Curry, Hamilton, Sharp, Friel, McCutcheon, imply Scotch-Irish or English-Irish ancestry.

Warwick, Matthews, Renick, Clark, Gibson, Johnson, Galford, Buckley, Kennison, Adkison, Barlow, Gatewood, Jackson, Brown, Wooddell, Hull, Cooper, Duffield, Auldridge, Duncan, Beale, Sutton, Callison, indicate English antecedants.

Maupin, Ligon, Dever, Tacey, Dilley, Bussard, and Large are of French extraction.

Poage, Pritchard, Price, Ruckman denote Welch extraction.

Kee, Doyle, Kelley, Loury, Cloonan, Scales, Rorke,

leave us in no doubt that the Emerald Isle is their fatherland.

These representatives of nationalties have blended and affiliated so that the characteristics of each fused, and the outcome is a composite citizenship, versatile in their tastes and aptitudes, fitted for a destiny in harmony with the progressive tendencies of that eventful period, the wonderful 19th century.

It is noticeable that the predominating element, as to numbers, trace their ancestry to the north of Ireland, and are either Scotch Irish or English Irish. This is explained in this manner.

About 1611 there was a district in Ireland that was largely depopulated by forfeiture of lands when O'Neil of Tyronne was defeated. Puritans from England and Reformers from Scotland were induced to occupy the abandoned property. These persons in turn had to seek elsewhere a refuge from oppression when there came a change in Irish affairs. Having been Scotch or English people living for a time in Ireland, they were called Scotch-Irish. In common usage the term is applied to both English and Scotch, as the Scotch seem to have largely predominated.

About the time when on the lookout for a refuge, the Virginians wanted a living wall for protection against Indian raids from beyond the Blue Ridge. Now when it became known that Germans, Scotch-Irish, and French Hugenots were willing to settle on the frontier; liberal concessions were made by the Virginia colonial authorities, and it was not many years—1732 to 1750—a line of settlements were formed, and the desired

living fortifications provided for. Therefore in the course of fifteen or twenty years subsequently to 1740, the more inviting sections of the counties of Monroe, Greenbrier, and Pocahontas were settled by a goodly number of enterprising families of the same type of people, inured to hardships and familiar with privations. These people had an experience of life along the frontier with its perilous emergencies for a period of thirty or more years of danger that developed strong elements of character along with a goodly degree of intellectual vigor. These people placed the highest value on education, and though their advantages were limited, they made the very best of their opportunities.

The Scotch-Irish trend of religious belief gives a high tone to the human intellect and awakens the highest aspirations of man's spirit nature; thus these early settlers had by inheritance the highest religious standard and the highest civilization of their times.

All history teaches, more or less plainly, that God has established His worship and the ordinances of the kingdom that is coming, to sustain and nourish the religious and intellectual life of His people. Now whenever these are wanting or neglected, the religious or higher life becomes feeble. While, therefore, the pioneers of this region came from such an ancestry as has been described, with such inherited proclivities, it should not be considered strange the temptations of frontier life and the comparative destitution or neglect of religious ordinances resulted in much irreligion, and consequent immorality. For all experience and observation go to show that when people of good parent-

age and of favorable opportunities do fall, they fall heavy and far. When people go back on their God, there is nothing between them and the horrible pit and mirey clay of sensuality, and of every hateful and hurtful propensity.

Nevertheless be it remembered to their never to be forgotten praise there were persons among our ancestors whose piety was as pure gold refined, and many homes were reared where genuine godliness was maintained. Many of these settlers endeavored to cherish the traditions of their covenanting ancestors, and of the martyrs whose blood stained many a beautiful vale in Scotland, and thus tried to live as worthy sons and daughters of an ancestry so worthy.

Now putting all that has appeared in these articles on applied history in review, we may learn something of the motives that impelled our ancestors to select their homes in this region.

They possessed an energetic spirit that prompted them to desire a place where they could acquire a competency of earthly goods, so needful in times of disability, and for the decrepitude of advancing years. These people came among the mountains seeking refuge from civil and religious wrongs, and have a sanctuary where God could be worshipped, none daring to molest or make them afraid. They felt it a duty to provide for their households, and here land was to be had in goodly portions and sufficient to locate sons and daughters near the parental home, so ardent were their family affinities.

These reflections on applied history are now submit-

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ted to our readers for their consideration, to be discussed in any way most in harmony with their opinions. The writer's ambition is that his people should have a history, and a future likewise, that may be worthy of praise and emulation.

"Should critics say my work is bad,
I won't indulge in wail or woe,
I'll simply smile and go my way
And say the critics do not know.

"But should they pat me on the back,
And say they think my work immense
I'll take a rosier view of life
To think they show such rare good sense."

Affairs having so far progressed, the formation of a new county was mooted and due arrangements made. A resolution to that effect was passed by the Virginia Legislature, March, 1821. Thomas Mann Randolph was the Governor who signed the bill, and being a descendant of Pocahontas, "the virgin queen of a virgin world," as General Skeene used to speak of her, this may have had something to do with the name selected for the county.

One of the most memorable days in the social and civil history of Pocahontas County was the 5th day of March, 1822, when the first court was held at the residence of John Bradshaw, at Huntersville, a log tenement that stood where the Lightner House now stands.

John Jordan, William Poage, James Tallman, Robert Gay, John Baxter, George Burner, and Benjamin Tallman were present and handed in their commissions

as Justices of the Peace, signed by Governor Randolph.

Colonel John Baxter administered the oath of office, each member qualifying four times, in virtue of which multiplied qualification the members of the new court were solemnly obligated to the faithful performance of official duties; fidelity to the Commonwealth of Virginia; support the national Constitution; and oppose dueling. William Poage, Jr., then administered the four prescribed oaths to Colonel John Baxter, and the proclamation was made that the court was duly open for business.

John Jordan was sworn in as High Sheriff, giving bond for $30,000, with Abram and Isaac McNeel as sureties or bondsmen. Josiah Beard was appointed Clerk, with Thomas Beard, George Poage and James Tallman bondsmen, on a bond for $3.000. Johnson Reynolds, of Lewisburg, qualified as Attorney for the Commonwealth. Sampson L. Mathews was recommended for appointment as Surveyor of Lands. William Hughes was appointed Constable for the Levels District, with William McNeel and Robert McClintock as sureties in a bond of $500. James Cooper was appointed Constable for the Head of Greenbrier, with William Slaven and Samuel Hogsett as bondsmen.

These proceedings occupied the first day, and court adjourned until 10 a. m. the following morning.

When Court convened March 6, 1822, all were present except Robert Gay. John Jordan, the High Sheriff, moved the Court that his son Jonathan Jordan be appointed Deputy Sheriff. The motion prevailed, granting the request, whereupon the four oaths, as al-

ready described, were duly administered by the Clerk.

James Callison, William Edminson, John Hill, John Cochran, Alexander Waddell, John McNeill ("Little John"), Robert Moore, Martin Dilley, Benjamin Arbogast, William Sharp, William Hartman, and Joseph Wolfenberger were appointed overseers of various roads, completed and prospective, in the county.

Robert Gay—still out of court—was appointed Commissioner of the Revenue. When informed of this appointment he appeared in court and gave bond in $1000 with William Cackley and John Baxter sureties, whereupon he was duly qualified.

Attorneys Cyrus Curry from Lexington, Rockbridge County, and Johnston Reynolds, from Lewisburg, Greenbrier County, were licensed to practice law as the first two members of the Pocahontas Bar.

The next business transacted at this historic term of the court appears to have been the organization of the 127th Regiment of the State militia as a part of Virginia military establishment. The folowing citizens were nominated as "fit and proper" to fill the requisite offices, and the Governor and Council were requested to issue commissions to them: John Baxter, Colonel; Benjamin Tallman, Lieutenant-Colonel; William Blair, Major; Boone Tallman, William Arbogast, Henry Herold, Isaac Moore, and Milburn Huges, Captains; Andrew G. Mathews, Robert Warwick, William Morgan, William Young, and James Rhea, Lieutenants; Jacob Slaven, James Wanless, Samuel Young, James Callison, Ensigns.

Mr Abram McNeel was recommended to the Gov-

ernor for Coroner.

Travis W. Perkins was granted license to open a hotel.

Thus organized, Pocahontas took her place among the counties of Virginia, and Huntersville was designated for the County Seat. A location near George Baxter's present residence, in the vicinity of what is now Edray, had been selected by a committee on location and reported on favorably as the place for the permanent location of the County Seat. Inducements by John Bradshaw were so enticing and favorable, and the people at the head of Greenbrier so anxious on the subject, that Huntersville prevailed, and the report of the committee on location was overruled.

In 1800 the population of the region coterminous with the present limits of Pocahontas County amounted to about one hundred and fifty-three persons, and were for the most part members of the first families that had permanent homesteads, whose heads were John McNeel, Thomas McNeill, Moses Moore, Peter Lightner, Henry Harper, John Moore, Felix Grimes, Samuel Waugh, James Waugh, Aaron Moore, Robert Moore, Timothy McCarty, Robert Gay, Jeremiah Friel, Jacob Warwick, John Slaven, John Warwick, Sampson Mathews, Josiah Brown, John Sharp, William Sharp, William Poage, John Baxter, Levi Moore, and John Bradshaw.

From the census returns it appears that in 1830 the population of the county was 2,542; in 1840, 2,922; in 1850, 3,598; in 1860, 3,958; in 1870, 4,069; in 1880, 5,591; in 1890, 6,813. in 1900, 8,572.

According to these official returns, the population of the county has increased from 2542 in 1830, to 8572 in 1900. The percentage of growth about 70.

From 1830 to 1860, the period before the war between the States, the percentage of gain was about 35. From 1860 to 1900 the percentage of gain was about 53. From 1890 to 1900, the gain was 20 per cent, and was larger than any previous decade, and readily accounted for.

The smallest rate of gain was between 1860 and 1870, about 2 per cent. In this decade the war occurred. The next less rate of gain was between 1850 and 1860—about 9 per cent. This indicates that just previous to the war the county was about ready to progress backwards, such was the disposition of people to look for homes in the far West, and the western counties of the State.